ΑΛΚΙΒΙΑΔΗΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣ

[Η ΠΕΡΙ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗΣ· ΜΑΙΕΥΤΙΚΟΣ]

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΑΛΟΓΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ, ΑΛΚΙΒΙΑΔΗΣ

St. II p. 138

ΣΩ. Ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, ἆρά γε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν προσευξόμενος πορεύῃ;

ΑΛΚ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Φαίνῃ γέ τοι ἐσκυθρωπακέναι τε καὶ εἰς γῆν βλέπειν, ὥς τι συννοούμενος.

ΑΛΚ. Καὶ τί ἄν τις συννοοῖτο, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. Τὴν μεγίστην, ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, σύννοιαν, B ὡς γ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ. ἐπεὶ φέρε πρὸς Διός, οὐκ οἴει τοὺς θεούς, ἃ τυγχάνομεν εὐχόμενοι καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ, ἐνίοτε τούτων τὰ μὲν διδόναι, τὰ δ' οὔ, καὶ ἔστιν οἷς μὲν αὐτῶν, ἔστι δὲ οἷς οὔ;

ΑΛΚ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν δοκεῖ σοι πολλῆς προμηθείας γε προσδεῖσθαι, ὅπως μὴ λήσει τις[1] αὐτὸν εὐχόμενος μεγάλα κακά, δοκῶν δ' ἀγαθά, οἱ δὲ θεοὶ τύχωσιν ἐν ταύτῃ ὄντες τῇ ἕξει, ἐν ᾗ διδόασιν αὐτοὶ ἅ τις εὐχόμενος τυγχάνει; ὥσπερ τὸν Οἰδίπουν αὐτίκα C φασὶν εὔξασθαι χαλκῷ διελέσθαι τὰ πατρῷα τοὺς

[1] λήσει τις Bekker: λήσεται mss.

ΑΛΚΙΒΙΑΔΗΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣ

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ΑΛΚ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν δοκεῖ σοι πολλῆς προμηθείας γε προσδεῖσθαι, ὅπως μὴ λήσει τις[1] αὐτὸν εὐχόμενος μεγάλα κακά, δοκῶν δ' ἀγαθά, οἱ δὲ θεοὶ τύχωσιν ἐν ταύτῃ ὄντες τῇ ἕξει, ἐν ᾗ διδόασιν αὐτοὶ ἅ τις εὐχόμενος τυγχάνει; ὥσπερ τὸν Οἰδίπουν αὐτίκα C φασὶν εὔξασθαι χαλκῷ διελέσθαι τὰ πατρῷα τοὺς

[1] λήσει τις Bekker: λήσεται mss.

ALCIBIADES II

[OR ON PRAYER: "OBSTETRIC"]

CHARACTERS

SOCRATES, ALCIBIADES

SOC. Alcibiades, are you on your way to offer a prayer to the god?

ALC. I am, certainly, Socrates.

SOC. You seem, let me say, to have a gloomy look, and to keep your eyes on the ground, as though you were pondering something.

ALC. And what might one ponder, Socrates?

SOC. The greatest of questions, Alcibiades, as I believe. For tell me, in Heaven's name, do you not think that the gods sometimes grant in part, but in part refuse, what we ask of them in our private and public prayers, and gratify some people, but not others?

ALC. I do, certainly.

SOC. Then you would agree that one should take great precautions against falling unawares into the error of praying for great evils in the belief that they are good, while the gods happen to be disposed to grant freely what one is praying for? Just as Oedipus, they say, suddenly prayed that his sons might divide their patrimony with the sword: it

υἱεῖς· ἐξὸν αὐτῷ τῶν παρόντων αὐτῷ κακῶν ἀποτροπὴν τινα εὔξασθαι, ἕτερα πρὸς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσι κατηρᾶτο· τοιγαροῦν ταῦτά τε ἐξετελέσθη, καὶ ἐκ τούτων ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ δεινά, ἃ τί δεῖ καθ' ἕκαστα λέγειν;

ΑΛΚ. Ἀλλὰ σὺ μέν, ὦ Σώκρατες, μαινόμενον ἄνθρωπον εἴρηκας· ἐπεὶ τίς ἄν σοι δοκεῖ τολμῆσαι ὑγιαίνων τοιαῦτ' εὔξασθαι;

ΣΩ. Τὸ μαίνεσθαι ἆρα ὑπεναντίον σοι δοκεῖ τῷ φρονεῖν;

ΑΛΚ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

D ΣΩ. Ἄφρονες δὲ καὶ φρόνιμοι δοκοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι εἶναί τινές σοι;

ΑΛΚ. Εἶναι μέντοι.

ΣΩ. Φέρε δή, ἐπισκεψώμεθα τίνες ποτ' εἰσὶν οὗτοι. ὅτι μὲν γάρ εἰσί τινες, ὡμολόγηται, ἄφρονές τε καὶ φρόνιμοι, καὶ μαινόμενοι ἕτεροι.

ΑΛΚ. Ὡμολόγηται γάρ.

ΣΩ. Ἔτι δὲ ὑγιαίνοντές εἰσί τινες;

ΑΛΚ. Εἰσίν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἀσθενοῦντες ἕτεροι;

139 ΑΛΚ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οὐχ οἱ αὐτοί;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ γάρ.

ΣΩ. Ἆρ' οὖν καὶ ἕτεροί τινές εἰσιν, οἳ μηδέτερα τούτων πεπόνθασιν;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ἀνάγκη γάρ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπον ὄντα ἢ νοσεῖν ἢ μὴ νοσεῖν.

ΑΛΚ. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

was open to him to pray that his present evils might by some means be averted, but he invoked others in addition to those which he had already. Wherefore not only were those words of his accomplished, but many other dread results therefrom, which I think there is no need to recount in detail.

ALC. But you have instanced a madman, Socrates: why, do you suppose that anyone could bring himself, while he was in a sound state, to utter such a prayer?

SOC. Do you regard madness as the opposite of wisdom?

ALC. Certainly I do.

SOC. And there are some men whom you regard as unwise, and others as wise?

ALC. Why, yes.

SOC. Come then, let us consider who these people are. We have admitted that some are unwise, some wise, and others mad.

ALC. Yes, we have.

SOC. And again, there are some in sound health?

ALC. There are.

SOC. And others also who are in ill-health?

ALC. Quite so.

SOC. And they are not the same?

ALC. No, indeed.

SOC. And are there any others besides, who are found to be in neither state?

ALC. No, to be sure.

SOC. For a human being must needs be either sick or not sick.

ALC. I agree.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; περὶ φρονήσεως καὶ ἀφροσύνης ἆρά γε τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχεις σὺ γνώμην[1];

ΑΛΚ. Πῶς λέγεις;

ΣΩ. Εἰ δοκεῖ σοι οἷόν τε εἶναι ἢ φρόνιμον ἢ ἄφρονα, ἢ ἔστι τι διὰ μέσου τρίτον πάθος, ὃ ποιεῖ
B τὸν ἄνθρωπον μήτε φρόνιμον μήτε ἄφρονα;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ἀνάγκη ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ ἕτερον τούτων πεπονθέναι.

ΑΛΚ. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν μέμνησαι ὁμολογήσας ὑπεναντίον εἶναι μανίαν φρονήσει;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ μηδὲν εἶναι διὰ μέσου τρίτον πάθος, ὃ ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον μήτε φρόνιμον μήτε ἄφρονα εἶναι;

ΑΛΚ. Ὡμολόγησα γάρ.

ΣΩ. Καὶ μὴν δύο γε ὑπεναντία ἑνὶ πράγματι πῶς ἂν εἴη;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐδαμῶς.

C ΣΩ. Ἀφροσύνη ἄρα καὶ μανία κινδυνεύει ταὐτὸν εἶναι.

ΑΛΚ. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Πάντας οὖν ἂν φάντες, ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, τοὺς ἄφρονας μαίνεσθαι ὀρθῶς ἂν φαίημεν· αὐτίκα τῶν σῶν ἡλικιωτῶν εἴ τινες τυγχάνουσιν ἄφρονες ὄντες, ὥσπερ εἰσί, καὶ τῶν ἔτι πρεσβυτέρων· ἐπεὶ φέρε πρὸς Διός, οὐκ οἴει τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει ὀλίγους μὲν εἶναι τοὺς φρονίμους, ἄφρονας δὲ δὴ τοὺς πολλούς, οὓς δὴ σὺ μαινομένους καλεῖς;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οἴει ἂν οὖν χαίροντας ἡμᾶς εἶναι μετὰ τοσού-

soc. Well then, do you hold the same view about wisdom and unwisdom ?

alc. How do you mean ?

soc. Tell me, do you think it is only possible to be either wise or unwise, or is there some third condition between these, which makes a man neither wise nor unwise ?

alc. No, there is not.

soc. So he must needs be in one or the other of these two conditions.

alc. I agree.

soc. And you remember that you admitted that madness is the opposite of wisdom ?

alc. I do.

soc. And further, that there is no third condition between these, which makes a man neither wise nor unwise ?

alc. Yes, I admitted that.

soc. Well now, can there possibly be two opposites of one thing ?

alc. By no means.

soc. Then it looks as though unwisdom and madness were the same.

alc. Yes, apparently.

soc. So we shall be right, Alcibiades, in saying that all unwise persons are mad ; for example, such of your contemporaries as happen to be unwise—some such there are—and of your elders, even : for tell me, in Heaven's name, do you not think that in our city the wise people are but few, whereas the majority are unwise, and these you call mad ?

alc. I do.

soc. Well, do you suppose we could safely live

[1] *σὺ γνώμην* Burnet: *ἔχει συγγνώμην, ἔχεις γνώμην* mss.

D *των μαινομένων πολιτευομένους, καὶ οὐκ ἂν παιομένους καὶ βαλλομένους, καὶ ἅπερ εἰώθασιν οἱ μαινόμενοι διαπράττεσθαι, πάλαι δὴ δίκην δεδωκέναι; ἀλλ' ὅρα, ὦ μακάριε, μὴ οὐχ οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει.*

ΑΛΚ. *Πῶς ἂν οὖν ποτ' ἔχοι, ὦ Σώκρατες; κινδυνεύει γὰρ οὐχ οὕτως ἔχειν ὥσπερ ᾠήθην.*

ΣΩ. *Οὐδ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ. ἀλλὰ τῇδέ πῃ ἀθρητέον.*

ΑΛΚ. *Πῇ ποτε λέγεις;*

ΣΩ. *Ἐγὼ δή σοί γε ἐρῶ. ὑπολαμβάνομέν τινας εἶναι νοσοῦντας· ἦ οὔ;*

ΑΛΚ. *Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.*

E ΣΩ. *Ἆρ' οὖν δοκεῖ σοι ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τὸν νοσοῦντα ποδαγρᾶν ἢ πυρέττειν ἢ ὀφθαλμιᾶν, ἢ οὐκ ἂν δοκεῖ σοι καὶ μηδὲν τούτων πεπονθὼς ἑτέραν νόσον νοσεῖν; πολλαὶ γὰρ δήπου γέ εἰσι, καὶ οὐχ αὗται μόναι.*

ΑΛΚ. *Ἔμοιγε δοκοῦσιν.*

ΣΩ. *Ὀφθαλμία οὖν σοι δοκεῖ πᾶσα νόσος εἶναι;*

ΑΛΚ. *Ναί.*

ΣΩ. *Ἆρ' οὖν καὶ πᾶσα νόσος ὀφθαλμία;*

ΑΛΚ. *Οὐ δῆτα ἔμοιγε· ἀπορῶ μέντοι πῶς λέγω.*

140 ΣΩ. *Ἀλλ' ἐὰν ἔμοιγε προσέχῃς τὸν νοῦν, σύν τε δύο σκεπτομένω τυχὸν εὑρήσομεν.*

ΑΛΚ. *Ἀλλὰ προσέχω, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰς δύναμιν τὴν ἐμήν.*

ΣΩ. *Οὐκοῦν ὡμολογήθη ἡμῖν ὀφθαλμία μὲν πᾶσα νόσος εἶναι, νόσος μέντοι οὐκ εἶναι πᾶσα ὀφθαλμία;*

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[1] *Cf.* Homer, *Il.* x. 224 *σύν τε δύ' ἐρχομένω, καί τε πρὸ δ τοῦ ἐνόησεν ὅππως κέρδος ἔῃ*, "if two go along together, then one marks before the other how advantage may be had."

with so many madmen as our fellow-citizens, and should not long ago have paid the penalty for it in knocks and blows at their hands, and all the usual proceedings of madmen? Consider now, my wonderful friend, whether the case is not quite different?

ALC. Well, it must be, Socrates. For it looks as though it were not as I thought.

SOC. And I think so too. But there is another way of regarding it.

ALC. I wonder what way you mean.

SOC. Well, I will tell you. We conceive there are some who are sick, do we not?

ALC. We do, to be sure.

SOC. And do you believe that a sick man must necessarily have the gout, or a fever, or ophthalmia? Do you not think that, although he may be afflicted in none of these ways, he may be suffering from some other disease? For surely there are many of them: these are not the only ones.

ALC. I agree.

SOC. And is every ophthalmia, in your opinion, a disease?

ALC. Yes.

SOC. And is every disease also ophthalmia?

ALC. No, I should think not: still, I am in doubt as to my meaning.

SOC. Well, if you will attend to me, "two together"[1] will be searching, and so mayhap we shall find what we seek.

ALC. Nay, but I am attending, Socrates, to the best of my power.

SOC. Then we have admitted that while every ophthalmia is a disease, every disease, on the other hand, is not ophthalmia?

ΑΛΚ. Ὡμολογήθη.

ΣΩ. Καὶ ὀρθῶς γέ μοι δοκεῖ ὁμολογηθῆναι. καὶ γὰρ οἱ πυρέττοντες πάντες νοσοῦσιν, οὐ μέντοι οἱ νοσοῦντες πάντες πυρέττουσιν οὐδὲ ποδαγρῶσιν
B οὐδέ γε ὀφθαλμιῶσιν, οἶμαι· ἀλλὰ νόσος μὲν πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτόν ἐστι, διαφέρειν δέ φασιν οὓς δὴ καλοῦμεν ἰατροὺς τὴν ἀπεργασίαν[1] αὐτῶν. οὐ γὰρ πᾶσαι οὔτε ὅμοιαι οὔτε ὁμοίως διαπράττονται, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν αὐτῆς δύναμιν ἑκάστη· νόσοι μέντοι πᾶσαί εἰσιν. ὥσπερ δημιουργούς τινας ὑπολαμβάνομεν· ἢ οὔ;

ΑΛΚ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν τοὺς σκυτοτόμους καὶ τέκτονας καὶ ἀνδριαντοποιοὺς καὶ ἑτέρους παμπληθεῖς, οὓς τί
C δεῖ καθ' ἕκαστα λέγειν; ἔχουσι δ' οὖν διειληφότες δημιουργίας μέρη, καὶ πάντες οὗτοί εἰσι δημιουργοί, οὐ μέντοι εἰσὶ τέκτονές γε οὐδὲ σκυτοτόμοι οὐδ' ἀνδριαντοποιοί, οἳ σύμπαντες εἰσι δημιουργοί.

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Οὕτως μὲν τοίνυν καὶ τὴν ἀφροσύνην διειληφότες εἰσί, καὶ τοὺς μὲν πλεῖστον αὐτῆς μέρος ἔχοντας μαινομένους καλοῦμεν, τοὺς δ' ὀλίγον ἔλαττον ἠλιθίους τε καὶ ἐμβροντήτους· οἱ δὲ ἐν εὐφημοτάτοις ὀνόμασι βουλόμενοι κατονομάζειν οἱ μὲν μεγαλοψύχους, οἱ δὲ εὐήθεις, ἕτεροι δὲ
D ἀκάκους καὶ ἀπείρους καὶ ἐνεούς· εὑρήσεις δὲ καὶ ἕτερα πολλὰ ἀναζητῶν ὀνόματα. πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἀφροσύνη ἐστί, διαφέρει δέ, ὥσπερ τέχνη

[1] ἀπεργασία here seems to be used for "effect produced" instead of its usual meaning, "fully effecting," "completion."

ALC. We have.

SOC. And our admission seems to me quite right. For everyone in a fever is sick, but yet not everyone who is sick has a fever or the gout or ophthalmia, I take it; though everything of the sort is a disease, but differs—to quote those whom we call doctors—in its manifestation.[1] For they are not all alike, nor of like effect, but each works according to its own faculty, and yet all are diseases. In the same way, we conceive of some men as artisans, do we not?

ALC. Certainly.

SOC. That is, cobblers and carpenters and statuaries and a host of others, whom we need not mention in particular; but any way, they have their several departments of craft, and all of them are craftsmen; yet they are not all carpenters or cobblers or statuaries, though these taken together are craftsmen.

ALC. No, indeed.

SOC. In the same way, then, have men divided unwisdom also among them, and those who have the largest share of it we call "mad," and those who have a little less, "dolts" and "idiots"; though people who prefer to use the mildest language term them sometimes "romantic,"[2] sometimes "simple-minded,"[3] or again "innocent," "inexperienced," or "obtuse"; and many another name will you find if you look for more. But all these things are unwisdom, though they differ, as we observed that one

[2] μεγαλόψυχος has here declined from "high-souled" or "magnanimous" to something like "Quixotic."

[3] εὐήθης, even in Plato's time, varied between "good-hearted" and "silly."

τέχνης ἡμῖν κατεφαίνετο καὶ νόσος νόσου· ἢ πῶς σοι δοκεῖ;

ΑΛΚ. Ἐμοὶ μὲν οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἀπ' ἐκείνου πάλιν ἐπανέλθωμεν. ἦν γὰρ δήπου καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ λόγου, σκεπτέον εἶναι τοὺς ἄφρονάς τε καὶ φρονίμους, τίνες ποτ' εἰσίν. ὡμολόγητο γὰρ εἶναί τινας· ἢ γὰρ οὔ;

ΑΛΚ. Ναί, ὡμολόγηται.

Ε ΣΩ. Ἆρ' οὖν τούτους φρονίμους ὑπολαμβάνεις, οἳ ἂν εἰδῶσιν ἅττα δεῖ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Ἄφρονας δὲ ποτέρους; ἆρά γε τοὺς μηδέτερα τούτων εἰδότας;

ΑΛΚ. Τούτους.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οἵ γε μὴ εἰδότες μηδέτερα τούτων λήσουσιν αὑτοὺς καὶ λέγοντες καὶ πράττοντες ἅττα μὴ δεῖ;

ΑΛΚ. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Τούτων μέντοι ἔλεγον, ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, καὶ
141 τὸν Οἰδίπουν εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων· εὑρήσεις δ' ἔτι καὶ τῶν νῦν πολλοὺς οὐκ ὀργῇ κεχρημένους, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνον, οὐδ' οἰομένους κακά σφισιν εὔχεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἀγαθά. ἐκεῖνος μὲν ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἠὔχετο, οὐδ' ᾤετο· ἕτεροι δέ τινές εἰσιν οἳ τἀναντία τούτων πεπόνθασιν. ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ οἶμαί σε πρῶτον, εἴ σοι ἐμφανὴς γενόμενος ὁ θεὸς πρὸς ὃν τυγχάνεις πορευόμενος, ἐρωτήσειε, πρὶν ὁτιοῦν εὔξασθαί σε, εἰ ἐξαρκέσει σοι τύραννον γενέσθαι τῆς Ἀθηναίων πόλεως· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο φαῦλον ἡγήσαιο καὶ μὴ μέγα τι, προσθείη καὶ πάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων· εἰ δέ σε
Β ὁρῴη ἔτι ἔλαττον δοκοῦντα ἔχειν, εἰ μὴ καὶ πάσης Εὐρώπης ὑποσταίη σοι, καὶ τοῦτο μὴ μόνον ὑπο-

art or one disease differs from another. Or how does it strike you ?

ALC. That is my view.

SOC. Then let us turn at this point and retrace our steps. For we said, you know, at the beginning that we must consider who the unwise can be, and who the wise : for we had admitted that there are such persons, had we not ?

ALC. Yes, we have admitted it.

SOC. Then you conceive those to be wise who know what one ought to do and say ?

ALC. I do.

SOC. And which are the unwise ? Those who know neither of these things ?

ALC. The same.

SOC. And those who know neither of these things will say and do unawares what one ought not ?

ALC. Apparently.

SOC. Well, just such a person, as I was saying, Alcibiades, was Oedipus ; and even in our time you will find many who do the same, not in a fit of anger, as he was : they think they pray not for something evil, but for something good. He neither prayed for that, nor thought he did, but there are others who are in the opposite case. For I imagine that if the god to whom you are now going should appear to you and first ask you, before you made any prayer, whether you would be content to become sovereign of the Athenian state and, on your accounting this as something poor and unimportant, should add " and of all the Greeks also " ; and if he saw you were still unsatisfied unless he promised you besides the mastery of all Europe, and should not merely

σταίη, ‹ἀλλ'›[1] αὐθημερόν σου βουλομένου ὡς πάντας αἰσθήσεσθαι, ὅτι Ἀλκιβιάδης ὁ Κλεινίου τύραννός ἐστιν· αὐτὸν οἶμαι ἄν σε ἀπιέναι περιχαρῆ γενόμενον, ὡς τῶν μεγίστων ἀγαθῶν κεκυρηκότα.

ΑΛΚ. Ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, κἂν ἄλλον ὁντινοῦν, εἴπερ τοιαῦτα συμβαίη αὐτῷ.

C ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ μέντοι ἀντί γε τῆς σῆς ψυχῆς οὐδ' ἂν τὴν πάντων Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ βαρβάρων χώραν τε καὶ τυραννίδα βουληθείης σοι γενέσθαι.

ΑΛΚ. Οὐκ οἶμαι ἔγωγε. πῶς γὰρ ἄν, μηθέν γέ τι μέλλων αὐτοῖς χρήσεσθαι;

ΣΩ. Τί δ' εἰ μέλλοις κακῶς τε καὶ βλαβερῶς χρῆσθαι; οὐδ' ἂν οὕτως;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ὁρᾷς οὖν ὡς οὐκ ἀσφαλὲς οὔτε τὰ διδόμενα εἰκῇ δέχεσθαί γε οὔτε αὐτὸν εὔχεσθαι γενέσθαι, εἴ γέ τις βλάπτεσθαι μέλλοι διὰ ταῦτα ἢ τὸ παράπαν τοῦ βίου ἀπαλλαγῆναι. πολλοὺς δ' ἂν D ἔχοιμεν εἰπεῖν, ὅσοι τυραννίδος ἐπιθυμήσαντες ἤδη καὶ σπουδάσαντες τοῦτ' αὐτοῖς παραγενέσθαι, ὡς ἀγαθόν τι πράξαντες, διὰ τὴν τυραννίδα ἐπιβουλευθέντες τὸν βίον ἀφῃρέθησαν. οἶμαι δέ σε οὐκ ἀνήκοον εἶναι ἔνιά γε χθιζά τε καὶ πρωϊζὰ γεγενημένα, ὅτε Ἀρχέλαον τὸν Μακεδόνων τύραννον τὰ παιδικά, ἐρασθέντα τῆς τυραννίδος οὐθὲν ἧττον ἥπερ ἐκεῖνος τῶν παιδικῶν, ἀπέκτεινε τὸν E ἐραστὴν ὡς τύραννός τε καὶ εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ ἐσόμενος· κατασχὼν δὲ τρεῖς ἢ τέτταρας ἡμέρας τὴν τυραννίδα πάλιν αὐτὸς ἐπιβουλευθεὶς ὑφ' ἑτέρων τινῶν

[1] ἀλλ' add. Dobree.

[1] Quoted from Homer, *Il.* ii. 303.

promise you that, but on the self-same day a recognition by all men, if you so desired, of Alcibiades, son of Cleinias, as their sovereign—I imagine you would actually depart in a transport of delight, as having secured the greatest of goods.

ALC. So would anybody else, I imagine, Socrates, at such a stroke of luck!

SOC. But still you would not wish to sacrifice your life even for the territory and sovereignty of all the Greeks and barbarians together.

ALC. I should think not. How could I, without a prospect of making any use of them?

SOC. And what if you had a prospect of making an evil and injurious use of them? Not in this case either?

ALC. No, indeed.

SOC. So you see it is not safe either to accept casually what one is given, or to pray for one's own advancement, if one is going to be injured in consequence, or deprived of one's life altogether. Yet we could tell of many ere now who, having desired sovereignty, and endeavoured to secure it, with the idea of working for their good, have lost their lives by plots which their sovereignty has provoked. And I expect you are not unacquainted with certain events "of a day or two ago,"[1] when Archelaus, the monarch of Macedonia, was slain[2] by his favourite, who was as much in love with the monarchy as Archelaus was with him, and who killed his lover with the expectation of being not only the monarch, but also a happy man: but after holding the monarchy for three or four days he was plotted against by others

[2] This assassination occurred in 399 B.C., the year of Socrates' death.

ἐτελεύτησεν. ὁρᾷς δὴ καὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων πολιτῶν —ταῦτα γὰρ οὐκ ἄλλων ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ παρόντες οἴδαμεν—ὅσοι στρατηγίας ἐπιθυμήσαν-
142 τες ἤδη καὶ τυχόντες αὐτῆς οἱ μὲν ἔτι καὶ νῦν φυγάδες τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως εἰσιν, οἱ δὲ τὸν βίον ἐτελεύτησαν· οἱ δὲ ἄριστα δοκοῦντες αὐτῶν πράττειν διὰ πολλῶν κινδύνων ἐλθόντες καὶ φόβων οὐ μόνον ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ στρατηγίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῶν κατῆλθον, ὑπὸ τῶν συκοφαντῶν πολιορκούμενοι πολιορκίαν οὐδὲν ἐλάττω τῆς ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων διετέλεσαν, ὥστε ἐνίους αὐτῶν εὔχεσθαι
B ἀστρατηγήτους εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐστρατηγηκέναι. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἦσαν οἱ κίνδυνοί τε καὶ πόνοι φέροντες εἰς ὠφέλειαν, εἶχεν ἄν τινα λόγον· νῦν δὲ καὶ πολὺ τοὐναντίον. εὑρήσεις δὲ καὶ περὶ τέκνων τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, εὐξαμένους τινὰς ἤδη γενέσθαι καὶ γενομένων εἰς συμφοράς τε καὶ λύπας τὰς μεγίστας καταστάντας. οἱ μὲν γὰρ μοχθηρῶν διὰ τέλους ὄντων τῶν τέκνων ὅλον τὸν βίον λυπούμενοι διήγαγον· τοὺς δὲ χρηστῶν μὲν γενομένων, συμφοραῖς
C δὲ χρησαμένων ὥστε στερηθῆναι, καὶ τούτους οὐδὲν εἰς ἐλάττονας δυστυχίας καθεστηκότας ἥπερ ἐκείνους, καὶ βουλομένους ἂν ἀγένητα μᾶλλον εἶναι ἢ γενέσθαι. ἀλλ' ὅμως τούτων τε καὶ ἑτέρων πολλῶν ὁμοιοτρόπων τούτοις οὕτω σφόδρα καταδήλων ὄντων, σπάνιον εὑρεῖν ὅστις ἂν ἢ διδομένων ἀπόσχοιτο ἢ μέλλων δι' εὐχῆς τεύξεσθαι παύσαιτο ἂν εὐχόμενος· οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ οὔτε ἂν τυραννίδος διδομένης ἀπόσχοιντο ἂν οὔτε στρατη-
D γίας οὐδ' ἑτέρων πολλῶν, ἃ παρόντα βλάπτει

in his turn, and perished. You have only to look at some of our own citizens—and these are examples that we know, not by hearsay, but by personal observation—who in their time have desired to hold military command and have obtained it, and see how some to this very day are exiles from our city, while others have lost their lives. And even those who are deemed to be faring best have not only gone through many dangers and terrors in holding their command, but on returning home have continued to be as sorely besieged by informers as they were by the enemy, so that some of them wished to heaven that they had been anything but commanders rather than have held such appointments. Of course, if these dangers and toils were conducive to our advantage, there would be some reason for them; but the case is quite the contrary. And you will find it is just the same in regard to children: some people have been known to pray that they might have them, and when they have got them have fallen into the greatest disasters and pains. For some have had children that were utterly bad, and have spent their whole lives in repining; while others, though they had good ones, were bereft of them by disasters that overtook them, and thus were cast into as great misfortune as the others, and wished that no children at all had been born to them. But nevertheless, with all this plain evidence, and a great deal more of a similar kind, before men's eyes, it is rare to find anyone who has either declined what was offered to him or, when he was likely to gain something by prayer, refrained from praying. Most men would not decline the offer of either a monarchy or a generalship or any of the various other things which bring with them harm

μᾶλλον ἢ ὠφελεῖ, ἀλλὰ κἂν εὔξαιντο ἂν γενέσθαι, εἴ τῳ μὴ παρόντα τυγχάνει· ὀλίγον δὲ ἐπισχόντες ἐνίοτε παλινῳδοῦσιν, ἀνευχόμενοι ἅττ' ἂν τὸ πρῶτον εὔξωνται. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἀπορῶ, μὴ ὡς ἀληθῶς μάτην θεοὺς ἄνθρωποι αἰτιῶνται, ἐξ ἐκείνων φάμενοι κακά σφισιν εἶναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ σφῇσιν εἴτε ἀτασθαλίαισιν εἴτε ἀφροσύναις χρὴ
E εἰπεῖν, ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσι. κινδυνεύει γοῦν, ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, φρόνιμός τις εἶναι ἐκεῖνος ὁ ποιητής, ὃς δοκεῖ μοι φίλοις ἀνοήτοις τισὶ χρησάμενος, ὁρῶν αὐτοὺς καὶ πράττοντας καὶ εὐχομένους ἅπερ οὐ βέλτιον ἦν, ἐκείνοις δὲ ἐδόκει, κοινῇ ὑπὲρ ἁπάντων αὐτῶν εὐχὴν ποιήσασθαι· λέγει δέ πως ὧδί·

143 Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἐσθλά, φησί, καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνεύκτοις
ἄμμι δίδου, τὰ δὲ δειλὰ[1] καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπαλέξειν

κελεύει. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν καλῶς δοκεῖ καὶ ἀσφαλῶς λέγειν ὁ ποιητής· σὺ δ' εἴ τι ἐν νῷ ἔχεις πρὸς ταῦτα, μὴ σιώπα.

ΑΛΚ. Χαλεπόν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐστὶν ἀντιλέγειν πρὸς τὰ καλῶς εἰρημένα· ἐκεῖνο δ' οὖν ἐννοῶ, ὅσων κακῶν αἰτία ἡ ἄγνοια τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ὁπότε, ὡς ἔοικε, λελήθαμεν ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς διὰ ταύτην καὶ
B πράττοντες καὶ τό γ' ἔσχατον εὐχόμενοι ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς τὰ κάκιστα. ὅπερ οὖν οὐδεὶς ἂν οἰηθείη, ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε πᾶς ἂν οἴοιτο ἱκανὸς εἶναι, αὐτὸς αὑτῷ τὰ βέλτιστα εὔξασθαι, ἀλλ' οὐ τὰ κάκιστα. τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς κατάρᾳ τινὶ ἀλλ' οὐκ εὐχῇ ὅμοιον ἂν εἴη.

[1] δειλὰ Buttmann: δεινὰ MSS.

rather than benefit, but would even pray to be granted them in cases where they were lacking : but after a little while they often change their tune, and retract all their former prayers. I question therefore if men are not really wrong in blaming the gods as the authors of their ills, when " they themselves by their own presumption "—or unwisdom, shall we say ?—" have gotten them more than destined sorrows." [1] It would seem, at any rate, Alcibiades, that one old poet had some wisdom ; for I conceive it was because he had some foolish friends, whom he saw working and praying for things that were not for their advantage, though supposed to be by them, that he made a common prayer on behalf of them all, in terms something like these :

King Zeus, give unto us what is good, whether we pray or pray not ;
But what is grievous, even if we pray for it, do thou avert.[2]

So then, to my mind the poet spoke well and soundly ; but if you have thought of an answer to his words, do not be silent.

ALC. It is difficult, Socrates, to gainsay what has been well spoken : one thing, however, I do observe —how many evils are caused to men by ignorance, when, as it seems, we are beguiled by her not only into doing, but—worst of all—into praying to be granted the greatest evils. Now that is a thing that no one would suppose of himself ; each of us would rather suppose he was competent to pray for his own greatest good, not his greatest evil. Why, that would seem, in truth, more like some sort of curse than a prayer !

[1] *Cf.* Homer, *Od.* i. 32. [2] *Cf. Anth. Pal.* x. 108.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλ' ἴσως, ὦ βέλτιστε, φαίη ἄν τις ἀνήρ, ὃς ἐμοῦ τε καὶ σοῦ σοφώτερος ὢν τυγχάνοι, οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἡμᾶς λέγειν, οὕτως εἰκῇ ψέγοντας ἄγνοιαν,
C εἴ γε μὴ προσθείημεν τὴν ἔστιν ὧν τε ἄγνοιαν καὶ ἔστιν οἷς καὶ ἔχουσί πως ἀγαθόν, ὥσπερ ἐκείνοις κακόν.

ΑΛΚ. Πῶς λέγεις; ἔστι γὰρ ὁτιοῦν πρᾶγμα ὅτῳ δὴ ὁπωσοῦν ἔχοντι ἄμεινον ἀγνοεῖν ἢ γιγνώσκειν;

ΣΩ. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ· σοὶ δ' οὔ;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἐκεῖνό σου καταγνώσομαι, ἐθέλειν ἄν σε πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μητέρα διαπεπρᾶχθαι, ἅπερ Ὀρέστην φασὶ καὶ τὸν Ἀλκμέωνα καὶ εἴ
D δή τινες ἄλλοι ἐκείνοις τυγχάνουσι ταὐτὰ διαπεπραγμένοι.

ΑΛΚ. Εὐφήμει πρὸς Διός, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Οὗτοι τὸν λέγοντα, ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἐθέλοις σοι ταῦτα πεπρᾶχθαι, εὐφημεῖν δεῖ σε κελεύειν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον πολύ, εἴ τις τὰ ἐναντία λέγοι· ἐπειδὴ οὕτω σοι δοκεῖ σφόδρα δεινὸν εἶναι τὸ πρᾶγμα, ὥστ' οὐδὲ ῥητέον εἶναι οὕτως εἰκῇ· δοκεῖς δ' ἂν τὸν Ὀρέστην, εἰ ἐτύγχανε φρόνιμος ὢν καὶ εἰδὼς ὅ τι βέλτιστον ἦν αὐτῷ πράττειν, τολμῆσαι ἄν τι τούτων διαπράξασθαι;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

E ΣΩ. Οὐδέ γε ἄλλον οἶμαι οὐδένα.

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ μέντοι.

ΣΩ. Κακὸν ἄρ', ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ βελτίστου ἄγνοια καὶ τὸ ἀγνοεῖν τὸ βέλτιστον.

ΑΛΚ. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

soc. But perhaps, my excellent friend, some person who is wiser than either you or I may say we are wrong to be so free with our abuse of ignorance, unless we can add that it is ignorance of certain things, and is a good to certain persons in certain conditions, as to those others it is an evil.

ALC. How do you mean? Can there be anything of which it is better for anybody, in any condition whatsoever, to be ignorant than cognisant?

soc. I believe so; and do not you?

ALC. No, indeed, upon my word.

soc. But surely I shall not have to tax you with an inclination to commit such an act against your own mother as Orestes and Alcmaeon, and any others who have followed their example, are said to have committed against theirs.

ALC. No unlucky words, in Heaven's name, Socrates!

soc. Why, it is not the person who says, Alcibiades, that you would not like to be guilty of such an act, whom you should bid avoid unlucky words, but much rather him who might say the contrary; since the act seems to you so very dreadful as to be unfit even for such casual mention. But do you think that Orestes, if he had had all his wits about him and had known what was best for him to do, would have brought himself to commit any act of the sort?

ALC. No, indeed.

soc. Nor would anyone else, I imagine.

ALC. No.

soc. Then it seems that ignorance of what is best, and to be ignorant of the best, is a bad thing.

ALC. I agree.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἐκείνῳ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν;

ΑΛΚ. Φημί.

ΣΩ. Ἔτι τοίνυν καὶ τόδε ἐπισκεψώμεθα· εἴ σοι αὐτίκα μάλα παρασταίη, οἰηθέντι βέλτιον εἶναι, Περικλέα τὸν σεαυτοῦ ἐπίτροπόν τε καὶ φίλον, ἐγχειρίδιον λαβόντα, ἐλθόντα ἐπὶ τὰς θύρας,
144 εἰπεῖν εἰ ἔνδον ἐστί, βουλόμενον ἀποκτεῖναι αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον, ἄλλον δὲ μηδένα· οἱ δὲ φαῖεν ἔνδον εἶναι— καὶ οὐ λέγω ἐθέλειν ἄν σε τούτων τι πράττειν· ἀλλ' εἰ, οἶμαι, δόξει σοι, ὅπερ οὐθὲν κωλύει δήπου τῷ γε ἀγνοοῦντι τὸ βέλτιστον παραστῆναι ποτὲ δόξαν, ὥστε οἰηθῆναι καὶ τὸ κάκιστόν ποτε βέλτιστον εἶναι· ἢ οὐκ ἄν δοκεῖ σοι;

ΑΛΚ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. Εἰ οὖν παρελθὼν εἴσω καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν
B ἐκεῖνον ἀγνοήσαις τε καὶ οἰηθείης ἂν ἄλλον εἶναί τινα, ἆρ' ἔτι ἂν αὐτὸν τολμήσαις ἀποκτεῖναι;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, οὐκ ἄν μοι δοκῶ.

ΣΩ. Οὐ γὰρ δήπου τὸν ἐντυχόντα, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον ὃν ἠβούλου. ἦ γάρ;

ΑΛΚ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ εἰ πολλάκις ἐγχειροῖς, αἰεὶ δὲ ἀγνοοῖς τὸν Περικλέα, ὁπότε μέλλοις τοῦτο πράττειν, οὔποτε ἂν ἐπίθοιο αὐτῷ.

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; τὸν Ὀρέστην δοκεῖς ἄν ποτε τῇ μητρὶ ἐπιθέσθαι, εἴ γε ὡσαύτως ἠγνόησεν;

C ΑΛΚ. Οὐκ οἶμαι ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐ γὰρ δήπου οὐδ' ἐκεῖνος τὴν προστυχοῦ-

soc. And not only for the person himself, but for everyone else ?

ALC. Yes.

soc. Then let us consider this further case. Suppose it should quite suddenly occur to your mind that you had better take a dagger and go to the door of Pericles, your own guardian and friend, and ask if he were at home, with the design of killing just him and no one else, and his servants said he was at home : now, I do not say you would be inclined to do any such thing, but I suppose, if you are under the impression which at some moment may well be present, surely, to the mind of a man who is ignorant of the best—that what is really the worst is best at some moment—or do you not agree ?

ALC. Quite so.

soc. Well then, if you went indoors and saw Pericles himself, but did not know him, and thought he was somebody else, would you still venture to kill him ?

ALC. No, upon my word, I should think not.

soc. For your man was, I presume, not anyone you met, but that particular person whom you wished to kill ?

ALC. Yes.

soc. And although you might make a number of attempts, if you always failed to know Pericles when you were about to commit the act, you would never attack him.

ALC. No, indeed.

soc. Well now, do you suppose that Orestes would ever have attacked his mother if he had similarly failed to know her ?

ALC. I do not think he would.

soc. For presumably he, too, had no intention

σαν γυναῖκα οὐδὲ τὴν ὁτουοῦν μητέρα διενοεῖτο ἀποκτεῖναι, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ.

ΑΛΚ. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Ἀγνοεῖν ἄρα τά γε τοιαῦτα βέλτιον τοῖς οὕτω διακειμένοις καὶ τοιαύτας δόξας ἔχουσιν.

ΑΛΚ. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Ὁρᾷς οὖν, ὅτι ἡ ἔστιν ὧν τε ἄγνοια καὶ ἔστιν οἷς καὶ ἔχουσί πως ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' οὐ κακόν, ὥσπερ ἄρτι σοι ἐδόκει;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔοικεν.

D ΣΩ. Ἔτι τοίνυν εἰ βούλει τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπισκοπεῖν, ἄτοπον ἂν ἴσως σοι δόξειεν εἶναι.

ΑΛΚ. Τί μάλιστα, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. Ὅτι, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, κινδυνεύει τό γε τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν κτῆμα, ἐάν τις ἄνευ τοῦ βελτίστου κεκτημένος ᾖ, ὀλιγάκις μὲν ὠφελεῖν, βλάπτειν δὲ τὰ πλείω τὸν ἔχοντα αὐτό.[1] σκόπει δὲ ὧδε. ἆρ' οὐκ ἀναγκαῖόν σοι δοκεῖ εἶναι, ὅταν τι μέλλωμεν ἤτοι πράττειν ἢ λέγειν, οἰηθῆναι δεῖν πρῶτον ἡμᾶς εἰδέναι ἢ τῷ ὄντι εἰδέναι τοῦθ' ὃ ἂν

E προχειροτέρως μέλλωμεν ἢ λέγειν ἢ πράττειν;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οἱ ῥήτορες αὐτίκα ἤτοι εἰδότες συμβουλεύειν ἢ οἰηθέντες εἰδέναι συμβουλεύουσιν ἡμῖν ἑκάστοτε, οἱ μὲν περὶ πολέμου τε καὶ εἰρήνης, οἱ δὲ περὶ τειχῶν οἰκοδομίας ἢ λιμένων κατασκευῆς·

145 ἐνὶ δὲ λόγῳ, ὅσα δή ποτε ἡ πόλις πράττει πρὸς ἄλλην πόλιν ἢ αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτήν, ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ῥητόρων συμβουλῆς ἅπαντα γίγνεται.

ΑΛΚ. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Ὅρα τοίνυν καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τούτοις.

ΑΛΚ. Ἂν δυνηθῶ.

of killing the first woman he met, or anybody else's mother, but only his own.

ALC. That is so.

SOC. Then to be ignorant in such matters is better for those who are so disposed and have formed such resolves.

ALC. Apparently.

SOC. So you see that ignorance of certain things is for certain persons in certain states a good, not an evil, as you supposed just now.

ALC. It seems to be.

SOC. Then if you care to consider the sequel of this, I daresay it will surprise you.

ALC. What may that be, Socrates?

SOC. I mean that, generally speaking, it rather looks as though the possession of the sciences as a whole, if it does not include possession of the science of the best, will in a few instances help, but in most will harm, the owner. Consider it this way: must it not be the case, in your opinion, that when we are about to do or say anything, we first suppose that we know, or do really know, the thing we so confidently intend to say or do?

ALC. I think so.

SOC. Well, take the orators, for example: they either know, or think they know, how to advise us on various occasions—some about war and peace, and others about building walls or fitting up harbours; and in a word, whatever the city does to another city or within herself, all comes about by the advice of the orators.

ALC. That is true.

SOC. Then observe the consequence.

ALC. If I am able.

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[1] αὐτό Schneider, αὐτά MSS.

ΣΩ. Καλεῖς γὰρ δήπου φρονίμους τε καὶ ἄφρονας;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν τοὺς μὲν πολλοὺς ἄφρονας, τοὺς δ' ὀλίγους φρονίμους;

ΑΛΚ. Οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν πρός τι ἀποβλέπων ἀμφοτέρους;

ΑΛΚ. Ναί.

B ΣΩ. Ἆρ' οὖν τὸν τοιοῦτον συμβουλεύειν εἰδότα, χωρὶς τοῦ πότερον βέλτιον καὶ ὅτε βέλτιον, φρόνιμον καλεῖς;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Οὐδέ γε, οἶμαι, ὅστις τὸ πολεμεῖν αὐτὸ οἶδε χωρὶς τοῦ ὁπότε βέλτιον καὶ τοσοῦτον χρόνον ὅσον βέλτιον. ἦ γάρ;

ΑΛΚ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ εἴ τίς τινα ἀποκτιννύναι οἶδεν οὐδὲ χρήματα ἀφαιρεῖσθαι καὶ φυγάδα ποιεῖν τῆς πατρίδος, χωρὶς τοῦ ὁπότε βέλτιον καὶ ὄντινα βέλτιον;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ μέντοι.

C ΣΩ. Ὅστις ἄρα τι τῶν τοιούτων οἶδεν, ἐὰν μὲν παρέπηται αὐτῷ ἡ τοῦ βελτίστου ἐπιστήμη—αὕτη δ' ἦν ἡ αὐτὴ δήπου ἥπερ καὶ ἡ τοῦ ὠφελίμου· ἦ γάρ;

ΑΛΚ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Φρόνιμον δέ γε αὐτὸν φήσομεν καὶ ἀποχρῶντα σύμβουλον καὶ τῇ πόλει καὶ αὐτὸν αὑτῷ· τὸν δὲ μὴ τοιοῦτον[1] τἀναντία τούτων. ἢ πῶς δοκεῖ;

ΑΛΚ. Ἐμοὶ μὲν οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Τί δ' εἴ τις ἱππεύειν ἢ τοξεύειν οἶδεν, ἢ αὖ πυκτεύειν ἢ παλαίειν ἤ τι τῆς ἄλλης ἀγωνίας

[1] τοιοῦτον J. G. Schneider: ποιοῦντα MSS.

SOC. Why, surely you call men either wise or unwise?

ALC. I do.

SOC. And the many unwise, and the few wise?

ALC. Precisely.

SOC. And in either case you name them in reference to something?

ALC. Yes.

SOC. Then do you call a man wise who knows how to give advice, without knowing whether and when it is better to act upon it?

ALC. No, indeed.

SOC. Nor, I conceive, a man who knows what war is in itself, without knowing when or for how long a time it is better to make war?

ALC. Agreed.

SOC. Nor, again, a man who knows how to kill another, or seize his property, or make him an exile from his native land, without knowing when or to whom it is better so to behave?

ALC. No, to be sure.

SOC. Then it is a man who knows something of this sort, and is assisted by knowledge of what is best,—and this is surely the same as knowledge of the useful, is it not?

ALC. Yes.

SOC. And we shall call him wise, and a competent adviser both of the city and of his own self; but a man not so qualified we shall call the opposite of these. How do you think?

ALC. I agree.

SOC. And what of a man who knows how to ride or shoot, or else to box or wrestle or contend in any

D ἢ καὶ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων ὅσα τέχνῃ οἴδαμεν, τί καλεῖς ὃς ἂν εἰδῇ τὸ κατὰ ταύτην τὴν τέχνην βέλτιον γιγνόμενον; ἆρ' οὐ τὸν κατὰ τὴν ἱππικὴν ἱππικόν;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Τὸν δέ γε, οἶμαι, κατὰ τὴν πυκτικὴν πυκτικόν, τὸν δὲ κατ' αὐλητικὴν αὐλητικόν, καὶ τἆλλα δήπου ἀνὰ λόγον τούτοις· ἢ ἄλλως πως;

ΑΛΚ. Οὔκ, ἀλλ' οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Δοκεῖ οὖν σοι ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τὸν περὶ τούτων τι ἐπιστήμονα ὄντα ἄρα καὶ ἄνδρα φρόνιμον
E εἶναι, ἢ πολλοῦ φήσομεν ἐνδεῖν;

ΑΛΚ. Πολλοῦ μέντοι νὴ Δία.

ΣΩ. Ποίαν οὖν οἴει πολιτείαν εἶναι τοξοτῶν τε ἀγαθῶν καὶ αὐλητῶν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἀθλητῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνιτῶν, ἀναμεμιγμένων δ' ἐν τοιούτοις οὓς[1] ἄρτι εἰρήκαμεν τῶν τε αὐτὸ τὸ πολεμεῖν εἰδότων καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀποκτιννύναι, πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν ῥητορικῶν πολιτικὸν φύσημα φυσώντων, ἁπάντων δὲ τούτων ὄντων ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ βελτίστου ἐπιστήμης καὶ τοῦ εἰδότος, ὁπότε βέλτιον ἑνὶ ἑκάστῳ τούτων
146 χρῆσθαι καὶ πρὸς τίνα;

ΑΛΚ. Φαύλην τινὰ ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Φαίης γε ἄν, οἶμαι, ὁπόταν ὁρᾷς ἕνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν φιλοτιμούμενόν τε καὶ νέμοντα τὸ πλεῖστον τῆς πολιτείας

τούτῳ μέρος,

ἵν' αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ τυγχάνῃ κράτιστος ὤν·

λέγω δὲ τὸ κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν τέχνην βέλτιστον

[1] οὓς Dobree: οἷς MSS.

other sport, or do anything that we know by rule of art? What do you call him who knows what is better done by rule of that particular art? Do you not say that he who goes by the rules of riding is a good rider?

ALC. I do.

SOC. And the rules of boxing, I suppose, make a good boxer, and those of flute-playing a good flute-player, and so, on the same lines,[1] I presume, with the rest; or is there any difference?

ALC. No, it is as you say.

SOC. Then do you think it inevitable that he who has some knowledge about these things should also be a wise man, or shall we say he comes far short of it?

ALC. Far short of it, I declare.

SOC. Then what sort of state do you suppose it would be, where the people were good bowmen and flute-players, together with athletes and artists in general, and mingled with these the men whom we have just mentioned as knowing war in itself and slaughter in itself, and orator-windbags too with their political bluster, but all of them lacked this knowledge of the best, and none knew when or upon whom it was better to employ their respective arts?

ALC. A paltry one, I should call it, Socrates.

SOC. Yes, you would, I expect, when you saw each one of them vying with the other and assigning the largest part in the conduct of the state to that

Wherein himself is found most excellent,[2]

I mean, what is done best by rule of his particular

[1] *ἀνὰ λόγον* occurs, with the genitive, in *Tim.* 29 c; the normal Platonic phrase for our passage is *ὡσαύτως*.

[2] *Cf. Gorg.* 484 E (Eurip. *Antiope*, fr.).

γιγνόμενον· τοῦ δὲ τῇ πόλει τε καὶ αὐτὸν αὑτῷ βελτίστου ὄντος τὰ πολλὰ διημαρτηκότα, ἅτε οἶμαι, ἄνευ νοῦ δόξῃ πεπιστευκότα. οὕτως δὲ
B τούτων ἐχόντων, ἆρ' οὐκ ἂν ὀρθῶς λέγοιμεν φάντες πολλῆς ταραχῆς τε καὶ ἀνομίας μεστὴν εἶναι τὴν τοιαύτην πολιτείαν;

ΑΛΚ. Ὀρθῶς μέντοι νὴ Δία.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἀναγκαῖον ἡμῖν ἐδόκει οἰηθῆναι δεῖν πρῶτον ἡμᾶς εἰδέναι ἢ τῷ ὄντι εἰδέναι τοῦτο, ὃ ἂν προχείρως μέλλωμεν ἢ πράττειν ἢ λέγειν;

ΑΛΚ. Ἐδόκει.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν κἂν μὲν πράττῃ ἅ τις οἶδεν ἢ δοκεῖ εἰδέναι, παρέπηται δὲ τὸ ὠφελίμως, καὶ λυσι-
C τελούντως ἡμᾶς ἔξειν καὶ τῇ πόλει καὶ αὐτὸν αὑτῷ;

ΑΛΚ. Πῶς γὰρ οὔ;

ΣΩ. Ἐὰν δέ γ', οἶμαι, τἀναντία τούτων, οὔτε τῇ πόλει οὔτ' αὐτὸν αὑτῷ;

ΑΛΚ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; καὶ νῦν ἔτι ὡσαύτως σοι δοκεῖ· ἢ ἄλλως πως;

ΑΛΚ. Οὔκ, ἀλλ' οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Ἆρ' οὖν ἔφησθα καλεῖν τοὺς μὲν πολλοὺς ἄφρονας, τοὺς δ' ὀλίγους φρονίμους;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν φαμεν πάλιν τοὺς πολλοὺς διημαρτηκέναι τοῦ βελτίστου, ὡς τὰ πολλά γε, οἶμαι, ἄνευ νοῦ δόξῃ πεπιστευκότας.

D ΑΛΚ. Φαμὲν γάρ.

ΣΩ. Λυσιτελεῖ ἄρα τοῖς πολλοῖς μήτ' εἰδέναι μηδὲν μήτ' οἴεσθαι εἰδέναι, εἴπερ γε μᾶλλον προθυμήσονται πράττειν μὲν ταῦτα, ἅττ' ἂν εἰδῶσιν

art—while he is entirely off the track of what is best for the state and for himself, because, I conceive, he has put his trust in opinion apart from intelligence. In these circumstances, should we not be right in saying that such a state is one great mass of turmoil and lawlessness ?

ALC. We should, upon my word.

SOC. And we took it to be necessary that we should first think we know, or really know, anything that we confidently intend either to do or to say ?

ALC. We did.

SOC. And if a man does what he knows or thinks he knows, and is assisted by knowing how to make it beneficial, we shall find him profitable both to the city and to himself ?

ALC. Certainly.

SOC. But if, I suppose, he does the contrary, he will not be so either to the city or to himself ?

ALC. No, indeed.

SOC. Well then, do you still take the same view now as before, or do you think differently ?

ALC. No, I take the same view.

SOC. And you said you called the many unwise, and the few wise ?

ALC. I did.

SOC. So now we repeat our statement that the many have missed getting the best because in most cases, I conceive, they have put their trust in opinion apart from intelligence.

ALC. Yes.

SOC. Then it is an advantage to the many neither to know nor to think they know anything, if they are going to be specially eager to do what they know or

ἢ οἰηθῶσιν εἰδέναι, πράττοντες δὲ βλάπτεσθαι τὰ πλείω μᾶλλον ἢ ὠφελεῖσθαι.

ΑΛΚ. Ἀληθέστατα λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Ὁρᾷς οὖν, ὅτε ἔφην κινδυνεύειν τό γε
E τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν κτῆμα, ἐάν τις ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ βελτίστου ἐπιστήμης κεκτημένος ᾖ, ὀλιγάκις μὲν ὠφελεῖν, βλάπτειν δὲ τὰ πλείω τὸν ἔχοντ' αὐτό, ἆρ' οὐχὶ τῷ ὄντι ὀρθῶς ἐφαινόμην λέγων;

ΑΛΚ. Καὶ εἰ μὴ τότε, ἀλλὰ νῦν μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Δεῖ ἄρα καὶ πόλιν καὶ ψυχὴν τὴν μέλλουσαν ὀρθῶς βιώσεσθαι ταύτης τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἀντέχεσθαι, ἀτεχνῶς ὥσπερ ἀσθενοῦντα ἰατροῦ ἢ τινος κυβερνήτου τὸν ἀσφαλῶς μέλλοντα πλεῖν. ἄνευ
147 γὰρ ταύτης,[1] ὅσῳπερ ἂν λαμπρότερον[2] ἐπουρίσῃ τὸ τῆς τύχης[3] ἢ περὶ χρημάτων κτῆσιν ἢ σώματος ῥώμην ἢ καὶ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων, τοσούτῳ μείζω ἁμαρτήματα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστιν, ὡς ἔοικε, γίγνεσθαι. ὁ δὲ δὴ τὴν καλουμένην πολυμαθίαν τε καὶ πολυτεχνίαν κεκτημένος, ὀρφανὸς δὲ ὢν ταύτης τῆς ἐπιστήμης, ἀγόμενος δὲ ὑπὸ μιᾶς ἑκάστης τῶν ἄλλων, ἆρ' οὐχὶ τῷ ὄντι δικαίως πολλῷ χειμῶνι χρήσεται, ἄτ', οἶμαι, ἄνευ κυβερνήτου διατελῶν ἐν πελάγει, χρόνον οὐ μακρὸν βίου
B θέων; ὥστε συμβαίνειν μοι δοκεῖ καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ὃ λέγει κατηγορῶν πού τινος, ὡς ἄρα πολλὰ μὲν ἠπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δέ, φησίν, ἠπίστατο πάντα.

ΑΛΚ. Καὶ τί δή ποτε συμβαίνει τὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ,

[1] ἄνευ γὰρ ταύτης transp. Lennep: ante ἢ περὶ χρημάτων MSS.
[2] λαμπρότερον Lennep: μὴ πρότερον MSS.
[3] τύχης Stallbaum: ψυχῆς MSS.

think they know, but are likely on the whole, in doing it, to be injured rather than benefited.

ALC. That is very true.

SOC. So you see that when I said it looked as though the possession of the sciences as a whole, where it did not include the science of the best, in a few cases helped, but in most harmed the owner, I was evidently right in very truth, was I not?

ALC. Though I did not then, I think so now, Socrates.

SOC. Hence the state or soul that is to live aright must hold fast to this knowledge, exactly as a sick man does to a doctor, or as he who would voyage safely does to a pilot. For without this, the more briskly it is wafted by fortune either to the acquisition of wealth or to bodily strength or aught else of the sort, the greater will be the mistakes in which these things, it would seem, must needs involve it. And he who has acquired the so-called mastery of learning and arts, but is destitute of this knowledge and impelled by this or that one among those others, is sure to meet with much rough weather, as he truly deserves; since, I imagine, he must continue without a pilot on the high seas, and has only the brief span of his life in which to run his course. So that his case aptly fits the saying of the poet, in which he complains of somebody or other that

> Full many crafts he knew: but still
> He knew them all so very ill.[1]

ALC. Why, how on earth is the poet's saying

[1] Quoted from the mock-epic *Margites*, of which only this and five other lines have survived. The hero, Margites, became the proverbial type of a blundering idiot, and the poem was generally attributed to Homer

ὦ Σώκρατες; ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ οὐδ' ὁτιοῦν δοκεῖ πρὸς λόγον εἰρηκέναι.

ΣΩ. Καὶ μάλα γε πρὸς λόγον· ἀλλ' αἰνίττεται, ὦ βέλτιστε, καὶ οὗτος καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι δὲ ποιηταὶ σχεδόν τι πάντες. ἔστι τε γὰρ φύσει ποιητικὴ ἡ σύμπασα
C αἰνιγματώδης καὶ οὐ τοῦ προστυχόντος ἀνδρὸς γνωρίσαι· ἔτι δὲ πρὸς τῷ φύσει τοιαύτη εἶναι, ὅταν λάβηται ἀνδρὸς φθονεροῦ τε καὶ μὴ βουλομένου ἡμῖν ἐνδείκνυσθαι ἀλλ' ἀποκρύπτεσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα τὴν αὑτοῦ σοφίαν, ὑπερφυῶς δὴ τὸ χρῆμα ὡς δύσγνωστον φαίνεται, ὅ τί ποτε νοοῦσιν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν. οὐ γὰρ δήπου Ὁμηρόν γε τὸν θειότατόν τε καὶ σοφώτατον ποιητὴν ἀγνοεῖν δοκεῖς, ὡς οὐχ οἷόν τε
D ἦν ἐπίστασθαι κακῶς· ἐκεῖνος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ λέγων τὸν Μαργίτην πολλὰ μὲν ἐπίστασθαι, κακῶς δέ, φησί, πάντα ἠπίστατο[1]· ἀλλ' αἰνίττεται, οἶμαι, παράγων τὸ κακῶς μὲν ἀντὶ τοῦ κακοῦ, τὸ δὲ ἠπίστατο ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐπίστασθαι· γίγνεται οὖν συντεθὲν ἔξω μὲν τοῦ μέτρου, ἔστι δ' ὅ γε βούλεται, ὡς πολλὰ μὲν ἠπίστατο ἔργα, κακὸν δὲ ἦν ἐπίστασθαι αὐτῷ πάντα ταῦτα. δῆλον οὖν ὅτι εἴπερ ἦν αὐτῷ κακὸν τὸ πολλὰ εἰδέναι, φαῦλός τις ὢν ἐτύγχανεν, εἴπερ γε πιστεύειν δεῖ τοῖς προειρημένοις λόγοις.

E ΑΛΚ. Ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ μὲν δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες· ἢ χαλεπῶς γ' ἂν ἄλλοις τισὶ πιστεύσαιμι λόγοις, εἴπερ μηδὲ τούτοις.

ΣΩ. Καὶ ὀρθῶς γέ σοι δοκεῖ.

ΑΛΚ. Πάλιν αὖ μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ φέρε πρὸς Διός—ὁρᾷς γὰρ δήπου τὴν ἀπορίαν ὅση τε καὶ οἵα· ταύτης δὴ καὶ σύ μοι

[1] ἠπίστατο Bekker: ἐπίστασθαι MSS.

[1] This trick of twisting the words of a quotation into an

apposite, Socrates? For to my mind it has nothing to do with the point.

SOC. It is very much to the point: but he, good sir, like almost every other poet, speaks in riddles. For poetry as a whole is by nature inclined to riddling, and it is not every man who can apprehend it. And furthermore, besides having this natural tendency, when it gets hold of a grudging person who wishes not to show forth to us his own wisdom but to conceal it as much as possible, we find it an extraordinarily difficult matter to make out whatever this or that one of them may mean. For surely you do not suppose that Homer, divinest and wisest of poets, did not know it was impossible to know ill; for it is he who says of Margites that he knew many things, but knew them all ill: but it is a riddle, I think, in which he has made "ill" stand for "evil," and "knew" for "to know." So if we put it together, letting the metre go, indeed, but grasping his meaning, we get this: "Full many crafts he knew, but it was evil for him to know them all."[1] Then clearly, if it was evil for him to know many things, he was in fact a paltry fellow, assuming we are to believe what we have previously argued.

ALC. But I think we may, Socrates: at least, if I cannot believe those arguments of ours, I shall find it hard to trust any others.

SOC. And you are right in so thinking.

ALC. I repeat that I think so.

SOC. But come now, in Heaven's name—for I suppose you see how great and strange is our perplexity, in which you, as it seems to me, have your

unnatural meaning is quite characteristic of Socrates. *Cf.* *Protag.* 343-7.

δοκεῖς κεκοινωνηκέναι· μεταβαλλόμενός γέ τοι ἄνω καὶ κάτω οὐδ' ὁτιοῦν παύῃ, ἀλλ' ὅ τι ἂν μάλιστά σοι δόξῃ, τοῦτο καὶ ἐκδεδυκέναι αὖ καὶ
148 οὐκέτι ὡσαύτως δοκεῖν—εἰ οὖν σοί γ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐμφανὴς γενόμενος ὁ θεός, πρὸς ὃν τυγχάνεις πορευόμενος, ἐρωτήσειε, πρὶν ὁτιοῦν εὔξασθαί σε, εἰ ἐξαρκέσει σοι ἐκείνων τι γενέσθαι ὧνπερ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐλέγετο, εἴτε αὐτῷ σοι ἐπιτρέψειεν εὔξασθαι, τί ποτ' ἂν οἴει ἢ τῶν παρ' ἐκείνου διδομένων λαμβάνων ἢ αὐτὸς εὐξάμενος γενέσθαι τοῦ καιροῦ τυχεῖν;

ΑΛΚ. Ἀλλὰ μὰ τοὺς θεούς, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐθὲν ἂν ἔχοιμί σοι εἰπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτως· ἀλλὰ μάργον
B τί μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς πολλῆς φυλακῆς, ὅπως μὴ λήσει τις αὐτὸν εὐχόμενος μὲν κακά, δοκῶν δὲ τἀγαθά, ἔπειτ' ὀλίγον ἐπισχών, ὅπερ καὶ σὺ ἔλεγες, παλινῳδῇ, ἀνευχόμενος ἅττ' ἂν τὸ πρῶτον εὔξηται.

ΣΩ. Ἆρ' οὖν οὐχὶ εἰδώς τι πλέον ἡμῶν ὁ ποιητής, οὗ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ λόγου ἐπεμνήσθην, τὰ δειλὰ[1] καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπαλέξειν ἐκέλευεν;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Τοῦτον μὲν τοίνυν, ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, καὶ
C Λακεδαιμόνιοι τὸν ποιητὴν ἐζηλωκότες, εἴτε καὶ αὐτοὶ οὕτως ἐπεσκεμμένοι, καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἑκάστοτε παραπλησίαν εὐχὴν εὔχονται, τὰ καλὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τοὺς θεοὺς διδόναι κελεύοντες αὖ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς· πλείω[2] δ' οὐδεὶς ἂν ἐκείνων εὐξαμένων ἀκούσειεν. τοιγαροῦν εἰς τὸ παρῆκον τοῦ

[1] δειλὰ Buttmann: δεινὰ, δῆλα MSS.
[2] πλείω Burnet: πλέον, πλείων MSS.

share ; for you change about from this side to that without settling down for a moment, but as soon as you are firmly convinced of a thing you seem to slip out of it again and cease to hold the same view—well, if the god to whom you are going should even now appear to you and ask, before you uttered any prayer, whether you would be content to obtain one of those things which were mentioned at the beginning, or whether he should leave you to pray as you were, how do you suppose you would make the best of your chance—by accepting his offer, or by praying for something on your own account ?

ALC. Well, by the gods, I could not answer your question, Socrates, offhand. Why, I take it to be a fatuous request,[1] when it is really a case for great caution lest one pray unawares for what is evil while thinking it to be one's good, and then after a little while, as you were saying,[2] one change one's tune and retract all one's former prayers.

SOC. And did not the poet whom I quoted at the beginning of our discussion [3] know more than we, when he bade us pray for the averting of what is grievous, even though we pray for it ?

ALC. I think so.

SOC. Then it is their admiration of this poet, Alcibiades, or perhaps the result of their own study, that causes the Spartans to offer a similar prayer whether the occasion be private or public—that the gods will give them for their own benefit the beautiful as well as the good : more than this no one can ever hear them pray for. The consequence is that to the

[1] *i.e.*, that I should answer offhand. The pun in *μάργον*, alluding to the "fatuous" Margites, cannot be rendered in English.

[2] 142 D. [3] 143 A.

χρόνου οὐδένων ἧττον εὐτυχεῖς εἰσὶν ἄνθρωποι· εἰ δ' ἄρα καὶ συμβέβηκεν αὐτοῖς ὥστε μὴ πάντα εὐτυχεῖν, ἀλλ' οὖν οὐ διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων εὐχήν· ἐπὶ
D τοῖς θεοῖς δ' ἐστίν ὥστε, οἶμαι, καὶ διδόναι ἄττ' ἄν τις εὐχόμενος τυγχάνῃ καὶ τἀναντία τούτων.

Βούλομαι δέ σοι καὶ ἕτερόν τι διηγήσασθαι, ὅ ποτε ἤκουσα τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τινῶν, ὡς Ἀθηναίοις καὶ Λακεδαιμονίοις διαφορᾶς γενομένης συνέβαινεν ἀεὶ τῇ πόλει ἡμῶν ὥστε καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν, ὁπότε μάχη γένοιτο, δυστυχεῖν καὶ μηδέποτε δύνασθαι κρατῆσαι· τοὺς οὖν Ἀθηναίους ἀγανακτοῦντας τῷ πράγματι καὶ ἀπορουμένους, τίνι χρὴ μηχανῇ τῶν παρόντων κακῶν ἀποτροπὴν
E εὑρεῖν, βουλευομένοις αὐτοῖς δοκεῖν κράτιστον εἶναι πέμψαντας πρὸς Ἄμμωνα ἐκεῖνον ἐπερωτᾶν· ἔτι δὲ πρὸς τούτοις τάδε, καὶ ἀνθ' ὅτου Λακεδαιμονίοις οἱ θεοὶ μᾶλλον νίκην διδόασιν ἢ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς, οἳ πλείστας, φάναι, μὲν θυσίας καὶ καλλίστας τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄγομεν, ἀναθήμασί τε κεκοσμήκαμεν τὰ ἱερὰ αὐτῶν ὡς οὐδένες ἄλλοι, πομπάς τε πολυτελεστάτας καὶ σεμνοτάτας ἐδωρούμεθα τοῖς θεοῖς ἀν' ἕκαστον ἔτος, καὶ ἐτελοῦμεν χρήματα
149 ὅσα οὐδ' οἱ ἄλλοι σύμπαντες Ἕλληνες· Λακεδαιμονίοις δέ, φάναι, οὐδεπώποτ' ἐμέλησεν οὐδὲν τούτων, ἀλλ' οὕτως ὀλιγώρως διάκεινται πρὸς τοὺς θεούς, ὥστε καὶ ἀνάπηρα θύουσιν ἑκάστοτε καὶ τἆλλα πάντα οὐκ ὀλίγῳ ἐνδεεστέρως τιμῶσιν ἢπερ ἡμεῖς, χρήματα οὐδὲν ἐλάττω κεκτημένοι τῆς ἡμετέρας πόλεως. ἐπεὶ δὴ εἰρηκέναι ταῦτα καὶ

[1] This seems to be the meaning of the Greek, which is certainly not Platonic. In Aristotle, *Phys.* iv. 13. 5 ὁ παρήκων χρόνος means "past time."

present time [1] they have been just as fortunate as any other people ; and if it has befallen them to be not invariably fortunate, it was anyhow not owing to their prayer. It rests with the gods, I conceive, to give us either what we may pray for or the reverse.

And I would like to give you an account of something else, which I once heard from some of my seniors. A quarrel having arisen between the Athenians and the Spartans, it befell our city to be always unsuccessful in every battle by land and sea, and she could never win a victory. So the Athenians, in their annoyance at this result, and at a loss for some means of finding a deliverance from the trouble they were in, took counsel together and decided that the best thing they could do was to send and inquire of Ammon [2] ; and moreover, to ask also for what reason the gods granted victory to the Spartans rather than to themselves : " for we "—such was the message—" offer up to them more and finer sacrifices than any of the Greeks, and have adorned their temples with votive emblems as no other people have done, and presented to the gods the costliest and stateliest processions year by year, and spent more money thus than all the rest of the Greeks together. But the Spartans have never taken any such pains, and indeed are so neglectful in their behaviour to the gods, that they make a practice of sacrificing defective victims, and generally are very much behind us in the honours that they pay, though the wealth they possess is quite equal to that of our city." When

[2] An Ethiopian god whose cult spread over Egypt, and through Cyrene to various parts of Greece: he had temples at Thebes and Sparta, but the famous one in the Libyan desert is probably meant here.

ἐπερωτῆσαι, τί χρὴ πράττοντας αὐτοὺς τῶν παρόντων κακῶν ἀπαλλαγὴν εὑρεῖν, ἄλλο μὲν
B οὐθὲν ἀποκριθῆναι τὸν προφήτην—τὸν γὰρ θεὸν οὐκ ἐᾶν δῆλον ὅτι—καλέσαντα δὲ αὐτόν, Ἀθηναίοις, φάναι, τάδε λέγει Ἄμμων· φησὶν ἂν βούλεσθαι αὑτῷ τὴν Λακεδαιμονίων εὐφημίαν εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ σύμπαντα τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἱερά. τοσαῦτα εἰπεῖν, οὐκέτι περαιτέρω. τήν γ' οὖν εὐφημίαν οὐκ ἄλλην τινά μοι δοκεῖ λέγειν ὁ θεὸς ἢ τὴν εὐχὴν αὐτῶν· ἔστι γὰρ τῷ ὄντι πολὺ διαφέρουσα τῶν
C ἄλλων. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι Ἕλληνες οἱ μὲν χρυσόκερως βοῦς παραστησάμενοι, ἕτεροι δ' ἀναθήμασι δωρούμενοι τοὺς θεούς, εὔχονται ἅττ' ἂν τύχῃ ταῦτα, ἄν τε ἀγαθὰ ἄν τε κακά· βλασφημούντων οὖν αὐτῶν ἀκούοντες οἱ θεοὶ οὐκ ἀποδέχονται τὰς πολυτελεῖς ταυτασὶ πομπάς τε καὶ θυσίας. ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ μοι πολλῆς φυλακῆς δεῖσθαι καὶ σκέψεως, ὅ τί ποτε ῥητέον ἐστὶ καὶ μή.

Εὑρήσεις δὲ καὶ παρ' Ὁμήρῳ ἕτερα παραπλήσια τούτοις εἰρημένα. φησὶ γὰρ τοὺς Τρῶας
D ἔπαυλιν ποιουμένους

ἔρδειν ἀθανάτοισι τελήεσσας ἑκατόμβας·

τὴν δὲ κνῖσαν ἐκ τοῦ πεδίου τοὺς ἀνέμους φέρειν οὐρανὸν εἴσω

ἡδεῖαν· τῆς δ' οὔ τι θεοὺς μάκαρας δατέεσθαι, οὐδ' ἐθέλειν· μάλα γάρ σφιν ἀπήχθετο Ἴλιος ἱρὴ
E καὶ Πρίαμος καὶ λαὸς ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο·

ὥστε οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς ἦν προὔργου θύειν τε καὶ δῶρα

[1] The use of ἀποκριθῆναι for "answered" instead of the

they had so spoken, and added the question, what they should do in order to find a deliverance from the trouble they were in, the prophet's only answer[1]—evidently it was all that the god allowed—was to call them to him and say : " Thus saith Ammon to the Athenians : I would rather have the reverent reserve[2] of the Spartans than all the ritual of the Greeks." So much he said, and not a word further. Now by " reverent reserve " I suppose the god could only mean their prayer, since in fact it differs greatly from those that are generally offered. For the Greeks in general either lead up bulls with gilded horns, or else present the gods with votive emblems, and pray for any odd thing, whether it be good or bad : so when the gods hear their irreverent speech they reject all these costly processions and sacrifices. Whereas I think we ought to be very cautious, and fully consider what is to be said and what is not.

And in Homer too you will find other tales of a similar sort. For he relates how the Trojans, in making their bivouac,

> Sacrificed to the immortals perfect hecatombs,

and how the winds bore the sweet savour from the plain into heaven :

> But the blessed gods partook not of it, nor would have it,
> For deep was their hate against holy Ilium,
> And Priam, and the folk of Priam of the good ashen spear.[3]

So it was nothing to their purpose to sacrifice and

usual *ἀποκρίνασθαι* is evidence for placing the writer a good deal later than Plato.

[2] *εὐφημία* means " avoidance of speech that may offend "—the opposite being *βλασφημία*.

[3] The four lines directly quoted are not in our manuscripts of Homer, but have been inserted in modern texts as *Il.* viii. 548, 550-2.

τελεῖν μάτην, θεοῖς ἀπηχθημένους. οὐ γάρ, οἶμαι, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ τῶν θεῶν, ὥστε ὑπὸ δώρων παράγεσθαι οἷον κακὸν τοκιστήν· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐήθη λόγον λέγομεν, ἀξιοῦντες Λακεδαιμονίων ταύτῃ περιεῖναι. καὶ γὰρ ἂν δεινὸν εἴη, εἰ πρὸς τὰ δῶρα καὶ τὰς θυσίας ἀποβλέπουσιν ἡμῶν οἱ θεοί, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς τὴν ψυχήν, ἄν τις ὅσιος καὶ
150 δίκαιος ὢν τυγχάνῃ. πολλῷ γε μᾶλλον, οἶμαι, ἢ πρὸς τὰς πολυτελεῖς ταύτας πομπάς τε καὶ θυσίας, ἃς οὐδὲν κωλύει πολλὰ μὲν εἰς θεούς, πολλὰ δ' εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἡμαρτηκότας καὶ ἰδιώτην καὶ πόλιν ἔχειν ἀν' ἕκαστον ἔτος τελεῖν· οἱ δέ, ἅτε οὐ δωροδόκοι ὄντες, καταφρονοῦσιν ἁπάντων τούτων, ὥς φησιν ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῶν προφήτης. κινδυνεύει γοῦν καὶ παρὰ θεοῖς καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσι δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ φρόνησις διαφερόντως τε-
B τιμῆσθαι. φρόνιμοι δὲ καὶ δίκαιοι οὐκ ἄλλοι τινές εἰσιν [ἢ][1] τῶν εἰδότων ἃ δεῖ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν πρὸς θεοὺς καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους. βουλοίμην δ' ἂν καὶ πυθέσθαι ὅ τί ποτε ἐν νῷ ἔχεις πρὸς ταῦτα.

ΑΛΚ. Ἀλλ' ἐμοί, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ ἄλλῃ πῃ δοκεῖ ἢ ἥπερ σοί τε καὶ τῷ θεῷ· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν εἰκὸς εἴη ἀντίψηφον ἐμὲ τῷ θεῷ γενέσθαι.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν μέμνησαι ἐν πολλῇ ἀπορίᾳ φάσκων εἶναι, ὅπως μὴ λάθῃς σεαυτὸν εὐχόμενος κακά,
C δοκῶν δὲ ἀγαθά;

ΑΛΚ. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Ὁρᾷς οὖν, ὡς οὐκ ἀσφαλές σοί ἐστιν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐξομένῳ, ἵνα μηδ' ἂν οὕτω τύχῃ, βλασφημοῦντός σου ἀκούων οὐθὲν ἀποδέξηται τῆς θυσίας ταύτης, τυχὸν δὲ καὶ ἕτερόν τι προσαπο-

[1] ἢ del. Winckelmann.

pay tribute of gifts in vain, when they were hated by the gods. For it is not, I imagine, the way of the gods to be seduced with gifts, like a base usurer. And indeed it is but silly talk of ours, if we claim to surpass the Spartans on this score. For it would be a strange thing if the gods had regard to our gifts and sacrifices instead of our souls, and the piety and justice that may be found in any of us. Far rather at these, I believe, do they look than at those costly processions and sacrifices which are offered, it well may be, by individual and state, year in, year out, though they may have offended greatly against the gods, or as greatly against their neighbours. But the gods are not to be won by bribes, and so they despise all these things, as Ammon and the holy prophet say. Certainly it would seem that justice and wisdom are held in especial honour both by the gods and by men of intelligence; and wise and just are they alone who know what acts and words to use towards gods and men. But I should like now to hear what may be your opinion on the subject.

ALC. Why, Socrates, it in no wise differs from yours and the god's; for indeed it would not be fitting for me to record my vote against the god.

SOC. And you remember you professed to be in great perplexity lest you should pray unawares for evil, while supposing it to be good?

ALC. I do.

SOC. You see, then, how unsafe it is for you to approach the god with your prayers, for it may chance that when he hears your irreverent speech he will reject your sacrifice altogether, and you may perhaps be accorded some other bad thing as well.

λαύσῃς. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν δοκεῖ βέλτιστον εἶναι ἡσυχίαν ἔχειν. τῇ μὲν γὰρ Λακεδαιμονίων εὐχῇ διὰ τὴν μεγαλοψυχίαν—τοῦτο γὰρ κάλλιστον τῶν ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ γε ὀνομάτων—οὐκ ἂν οἶμαί σε ἐθέλειν
D χρῆσθαι. ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἐστὶ περιμένειν, ἕως ἄν τις μάθῃ, ὡς δεῖ πρὸς θεοὺς καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακεῖσθαι.

ΑΛΚ. Πότε οὖν παρέσται ὁ χρόνος οὗτος, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ τίς ὁ παιδεύσων; ἥδιστα γὰρ ἄν μοι δοκῶ ἰδεῖν τοῦτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον τίς ἐστιν.

ΣΩ. Οὗτος ᾧ μέλει περὶ σοῦ. ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ μοι, ὥσπερ τῷ Διομήδει φησὶ τὴν Ἀθηναν Ὅμηρος ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀφελεῖν τὴν ἀχλύν,

ὄφρ' εὖ γιγνώσκοι ἠμὲν θεὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἄνδρα,

E οὕτω καὶ σοὶ δεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πρῶτον τὴν ἀχλὺν ἀφελόντα, ἣ νῦν παροῦσα τυγχάνει, τὸ τηνικαῦτ' ἤδη προσφέρειν δι' ὧν μέλλεις γνώσεσθαι ἠμὲν κακὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἐσθλόν. νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἄν μοι δοκεῖς δυνηθῆναι.

ΑΛΚ. Ἀφαιρείτω, εἴτε βούλεται τὴν ἀχλὺν εἴτε ἄλλο τι· ὡς ἐγὼ παρεσκεύασμαι μηθὲν ἂν φυγεῖν τῶν ὑπ' ἐκείνου προσταττομένων, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος,[1] εἴ γε μέλλοιμι βελτίων γενέσθαι.

151 ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ μὴν κἀκεῖνος θαυμαστὴν ὅσην περὶ σὲ προθυμίαν ἔχει.

ΑΛΚ. Εἰς τότε τοίνυν καὶ τὴν θυσίαν ἀναβάλλεσθαι κράτιστον εἶναί μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Καὶ ὀρθῶς γέ σοι δοκεῖ· ἀσφαλέστερον γάρ ἐστιν ἢ παρακινδυνεύειν τοσοῦτον κίνδυνον.

ΑΛΚ. Ἀλλὰ πῶς, ὦ Σώκρατες; καὶ μὴν τουτονὶ

[1] ἄνθρωπος Schanz: ἄνθρωπος, ὁ ἄνθρωπος MSS.

In my opinion, therefore, it is best to hold your peace : for I expect you will not consent to use the Spartan's prayer, you have such a *romantic* spirit—to give it the fairest of folly's names.[1] It is necessary, therefore, to bide one's time until one can learn how one should behave towards gods and men.

ALC. Well, when will that time arrive, Socrates, and who is to be my instructor ? For I feel I should very much like to see who the man is.

SOC. It is he who is concerned about you. But I think, as Homer relates how Athena removed the mist from the eyes of Diomede,

> That he might well discern both god and man,[2]

so you too must first have the mist removed which now enwraps your soul, and then you will be ready to receive the means whereby you will discern both evil and good. For at present I do not think you could do so.

ALC. Let him remove the mist or whatever else he likes to call it : for I am prepared to obey every one of his commands, without shirking, whoever the man may be, so long as I am to be the better for them.

SOC. I tell you, he on his part is prodigiously anxious to help you.

ALC. Then I think it best to defer the sacrifice also till the time comes.

SOC. And you are quite right : for that is safer than running so serious a risk.

ALC. But how say you, Socrates ? Look now, I

[1] *Cf.* 140 c. [2] *Il.* v. 127.

τὸν στέφανον, ἐπειδή μοι δοκεῖς καλῶς συμβεβουλευκέναι, σοὶ περιθήσω· τοῖς θεοῖς δὲ καὶ
B στεφάνους καὶ τἆλλα πάντα τὰ νομιζόμενα τότε δώσομεν, ὅταν ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐλθοῦσαν ἴδω. ἥξει δ' οὐ διὰ μακροῦ τούτων θελόντων.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ δέχομαι καὶ τοῦτο, καὶ ἄλλο δὲ ἄν τι τῶν παρὰ σοῦ δοθέντων ἡδέως ἴδοιμι δεξάμενον ἐμαυτόν. ὥσπερ δὲ καὶ ὁ Κρέων Εὐριπίδῃ πεποίηται τὸν Τειρεσίαν ἰδὼν ἔχοντα τὰ στέφη καὶ ἀκούσας ἀπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ἀπαρχὰς αὐτὸν εἰληφέναι διὰ τὴν τέχνην,

οἰωνὸν ἐθέμην, φησί, καλλίνικα ‹σὰ›[1] στέφη·
ἐν γὰρ κλύδωνι κείμεθ', ὥσπερ οἶσθα σύ·

C οὕτω δὲ κἀγὼ παρὰ σοῦ τὴν δόξαν ταύτην οἰωνὸν τίθεμαι. δοκῶ δέ μοι οὐκ ἐν ἐλάττονι κλύδωνι τοῦ Κρέοντος εἶναι, καὶ βουλοίμην ἂν καλλίνικος γενέσθαι τῶν σῶν ἐραστῶν.

[1] σὰ Eur. *Phoen.* 858: om. mss.

will crown you with this garland, as I consider you have given me such good advice; and to the gods we shall offer both garlands and all the other customary things when I see that day has come. And come it will ere long, if they are willing.

soc. Well, I accept this gift; and anything else besides, that you may give me, I shall be only too happy to accept.[1] And as Euripides has made Creon say when he sees Teiresias wearing his wreaths, and hears that he has obtained them, on account of his art, as first-fruits of the spoils of war:

> As omen good I take thy victor's wreaths;
> For in the waves we labour, as thou knowest,—[2]

so do I take this opinion of yours as a good omen. For I consider I am no less wave-tossed than Creon, and would like to come off victorious over your lovers.

[1] The Greek here is literally—"I should gladly see myself to have accepted"—which seems very unplatonic.

[2] Eurip. *Phoen.* 858-9. The blind prophet Teiresias has been crowned by the Athenians for the aid he has given them in a successful war. Eteocles, the young king of Thebes, has left the city in charge of his uncle Creon while he is fighting his brother Polynices for the possession of the throne.